

Yeovil Town Council

Town House
19 Union Street
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BA20 1PQ



Mayor: Cllr A Kendall
Chief Executive/ Town Clerk: Amanda Card BA (Hons), FCPFA, BSc (Open)
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Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Finance & Policy Executive 26th November 2024 at 7.00pm held by video-conference using Zoom meeting software; and in the Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil BA20 1PQ.

Present (in person): Cllrs A Soughton (Chair); T Casey; K Gill; A Kendall; T Lock; J Lowery; G Oakes; E Potts-Jones; A Richards; R Spinner; R Stickland; A Wilkes and D Woan.

In Attendance (in person): Cllr W Read (Yeovil Summerlands Ward); A Card (Chief Executive / Town Clerk) and J Pang (Deputy Responsible Finance Officer).

There were no members of the public present, and one member of the press present virtually.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

7:00pm – the meeting commenced.

11/241 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

There were no apologies.

11/242 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Agenda Item	Interest	Interest due to
Cllr J Lowery	11/251 (Octagon Theatre)	Personal	Daughter works at Westlands Entertainment Venue

11/243 MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2024.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meetings held on 24th September be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

11/244 APPLICATION FOR GRANT AID

There were no grants.

11/245 2024/25 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31st OCTOBER 2024 (MONTH 1 – 7)

The Chief Executive / Town Clerk re-introduced the Deputy Responsible Finance Officer, who would attend the meetings of the Finance and Policy Executive going forward.

The Executive considered the report of the Chief Executive / Town Clerk. The report provided Members with the current projection of the expected expenditure and income against the Council approved budget for the financial year 2024/25. Current projections highlighted an anticipated underspend of £512,274 (20.8%) which is largely due to Westlands Entertainment Venue, Yeovil Country Park and Café, Yeovil Recreation Centre and South Somerset Heritage Collection being in control of Yeovil Town Council for 8 months out of the current financial year. The Council are also holding some vacancies. The Chief Executive / Town Clerk indicated that the detail of significant differences had not been reported as usual, but in future Members should expect to see this.

The Chief Executive / Town Clerk reported to the Executive that Yeovil Without Parish Council had agreed in principle to contribute £20,000, which was made up of £10,000 for Yeovil Recreation Centre and £10,000 for Yeovil Country Park on the basis that these facilities overlapped into Yeovil Without Parish Council. They had also agreed in principle to contribute the £20,000 in future years.

At this point, Cllr R Stickland declared a personal interest since he was the Chair of Yeovil Without Parish Council.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

11/246 TRANSFER AND FUTURE OF YEOVIL IN BLOOM PROGRAMME

The Executive considered the recommendation of the Leisure and Environment Committee regarding the old ski centre and community hub.

Concerns were raised as to whether Somerset Council would be able to devolve the services in time. The Chief Executive / Town Clerk responded that both her and the Director of Leisure and Environment were in discussions with Somerset Council to put together a timetable. Somerset Council were experiencing capacity issues.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) to agree to focus growing efforts at the ski centre site and establishing a new community Growing Hub and horticulture programme, alongside a Biodiversity Net Gain offer for the site.

11/247 CONFIDENTIAL MEETINGS AND VIRUTAL ATTENDANCE

The Executive considered the report of the Chief Executive / Town Clerk.

Members were reminded that there had been a consultation being carried out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government regarding remote and hybrid attendance at local authority meetings. Extensive debate was had.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) that Councillors must keep their cameras on during the confidential discussions; that if the camera is switched off, the Clerk of the meeting will remove the councillor from the meeting; that Councillors must declare that they are on their own; that Councillors must use a headset and microphone to optimise confidentiality; and Councillors will not be allowed to record that part of the meeting; and (3) that the conditions laid down in (2) be reviewed should Government legislation come forward to the contrary.

11/248 DRAFT BUDGET 2025/26

Members considered the report of the Chief Executive / Town Clerk regarding the draft budget for 2025/26.

A question was raised regarding the additional employee costs due to employers NI contributions.

A question was asked to confirm the reserves balances. The Chief Executive / Town Clerk did not have that information to hand. *The Earmarked Reserves balance has been estimated to be £658,575 as at 31st March 2025 and the Unallocated General Fund Balance has been estimated to be £1,429,155 as at 31st March 2025.*

The Chief Executive / Town Clerk confirmed that the increase of 3.5% for 2025/26 was calculated on the 2024/25 budget.

The Chief Executive / Town Clerk reminded Councillors that this was an iterative process and that she would still be finetuning the budget until the January Town Council meeting.

The Chair of the Committee thanked the Chief Executive / Town Clerk and her team for the huge amount of work to put together the budget.

A question was raised regarding where the underspend will go. The Chief Executive / Town Clerk stated that it would go into the Unallocated General Fund Balance. She highlighted that the Council should be holding higher levels than in previous years, because of the size of the budget and the increase in risks.

RESOLVED: (1) that the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee recommend to Council the Leisure & Environment Committee budget for 2025/26; (2) that the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee recommend to Council the Culture, Events & Promotions Committee budget for 2025/26; (3) that the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee recommend to Council the Infrastructure (Property & Assets) Committee budget for 2025/26, including the following:

Type of Hire	Rate of Hire (2024/25) (per hall/room per hour or part thereof)	Rate of Hire (202526) (per hall/room per hour or part thereof)
Milford Community Hall:		
Rate for commercial organisations/persons	£25.50	£26.00
Private Functions	£12.50	£13.00
Damage Deposit for Private Functions (returnable if hall left in a satisfactory condition)	£175.00	£175.00
Non-profit making Organisations	£10.50	£11.00
Use of Main Hall Kitchen (included in hall/room hire charge for non-profit making organisations)	£17.00	£17.00
Type of Hire	Rate of Hire (2024/25) (per hall/room per hour or part thereof)	Proposed Rate of Hire (202526) (per hall/room per hour or part thereof)
Town House Council Chamber:		
Hire	£10.50	£11.00
Provision of tea/coffee (per hire)	£15.00	£15.00
Use of Kitchen without tea/coffee (per hire)	£7.50	£7.50

; (4) that the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee recommend to Council the Planning budget for 2025/26; (5) to note that the Crematorium and Cemetery Committee budget for 2025/26 for Yeovil Town Council will be available at the Crematorium & Cemetery Committee meeting held on 8th January 2025; and (7) that the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee, recommend to Council, it's budget for 2025/26.

8:01pm – the meeting was adjourned.

8:08pm – the meeting was reconvened.

11/249 CHIEF EXECUTIVE/TOWN CLERK'S UPDATE

Member considered the report of the Chief Executive / Town Clerk.

RESOLVED: to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity of the remaining agenda items would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3.

8:10pm – the member of the press left the meeting and did not return.

Lengthy discussions were held regarding the update

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) to delegate to the Chief Executive / Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair of this committee, to action the recommendations from the Staffing Committee.

11/250 OCTAGON THEATRE (CONFIDENTIAL)

The Programme Manager from Somerset Council gave a briefing about Octagon Theatre.

Reference was made by a Councillor about surrounding parishes contributing to the Octagon Theatre.

At this point, Cllr R Stickland declared a personal interest because he was the Chair of Yeovil Without Parish Council.

9:06pm – Cllr A Richards left the meeting and did not return.

9:30pm – Cllr D Woan left the meeting.

9:33pm – Cllr D Woan returned.

9:35pm – Cllr W Read left the meeting.

9:36pm – Cllr W Read returned.

9:37pm – Cllr J Lowery and Cllr E Potts-Jones left the meeting and did not return.

9:42pm – Cllr R Spinner left the meeting and did not return.

RESOLVED: to note the briefing.

The meeting closed at 9:58 pm.

Signed: (Chair) Date